



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
September 7, 2007
Community Boating, Boston, Ma

Meeting Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: Chairman Dick Cross, Councilors, Michael Dutton, Laura Johnson, Whitney Hatch, John Natoli, Christina Crowley and Dan Wolf.

Public Attendees: Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells; Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhood; A. Richard Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee; Jill Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee; Carol Gilmour, Friends of Robinson State Park; Rick O'Neil, Friends of Robinson State Park; Pine du Bois, Jones River Watershed Association; Joe Dorant, Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and Scientist

DCR Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Stephanie Cooper, Jim DiMaio, Gary Briere, Marianne Fleckner, Tom LaRosa, Suzanne Wilson, Jonathan Yeo, Jack Donohue, Marcelle Valentin, and Joe Rotondo.

I. Call To Order (1:10 p.m.), Councilor Cross

- a. Chairman Cross briefly greeted the Council, the public, and Commissioner Sullivan. Discussed bringing a world class system and that there will be many updates and activities that will come up in the coming months.

II. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Rick Sullivan

- a. Commissioner Sullivan welcomed and thanked Marianne Fleckner, Director of Administration & Finance; Derek Lennon, Chief Financial Officer; and the Senior Staff involved in the budget and bond bill, for the capital projects. This involvement promotes the financial plans for the field to aid in creating a world class system.
- b. A new hire, Jeff Daley will commence his position as the Senior Policy Advisor on September 24th, 2007. Part of Jeff Daley's responsibility will be to work with the Stewardship Council directly in communications to the committees, the mission and needs of the council. He will be reporting directly to the Commissioner.
- c. The Stewardship Council has three positions available for candidates. The Commissioner advised if anyone has appointments that they recommend, to submit applicants to the Commissioner which will ultimately go to the Governor for review. A review for any council members who do not show for three meetings without justification should have punitive action.
- d. Recently, the media has drawn the eyes of the public concern to our bridges and parkways, and the Commissioner commended Dave Lenhardt and the additional Planning & Engineering staff for their impressive response. DCR continues to take steps to ensure that its bridges and roadways are safe and secure.
- e. The agency has been addressing areas of concern that have been identified during the ongoing 40-day inspection of the Longfellow Bridge. Repairs have been completed on

two “jack beams” that provide additional support to the deck system. While considered non-emergency in nature, these repairs were necessary to certify the structural safety of the “jack beams” and to ensure constituents are not in danger. This project is expected to take another 4-5 weeks, and, as with all bridge and parkway repair projects, measures are being taken to reduce traffic impacts through the scheduling of construction during low-use hours and through public notice and outreach.

- f. Emergency repairs were made to the BU Bridge, the Craigie Draw Bridge, and completed repairs at Neponset River Bridge. The Woods Memorial Bridge was also inspected on August 21st and is awaiting the consultant’s recommendations on repairs.
- g. In regards to the Storrow Drive Tunnel Reconstruction Project there will be a processed draft on October 1st, 2007, that states instruction and traffic management process, Commissioner Sullivan acknowledges that there is impact on traffic and never the less, safety is of importance. He would like public opinion on Oct 1st, 2007.
- h. For the first time piping plovers species nested on Revere Beach. The rare and endangered piping plover species has been recently detected nesting at the north end of Revere Beach. This is generally taken to indicate that we are moving in the right direction, in terms of restoring the ecological health of the area. DCR continues to take measures to protect the young plover that remains at the beach. We are working with DEP to fence the area and, with the assistance of Mass. Audubon and NE Aquarium volunteers, are monitoring its activity until it “fledges” and leaves the area.
- i. Stewards of the beach meeting on 9/29. There will be a report later on OHV, Forest Policy, and Capital.
- j. On August 17 at Moore State Park, DCR honored the 11 students graduating from its 2007 Park Fellows Program. This is the third year of this Program, which was developed by DCR in partnership with the UMass Donahue Institute. The nine-week course is designed to help college students explore their interest in park management and operations. The students were assigned to DCR parks across the state, tackling a variety of parks management tasks and working with a mentor from DCR’s professional park staff. Commissioner Sullivan took the opportunity to thank all of the DCR staff who worked hard to develop, coordinate, and implement this program, as well as those who served as mentors.
- k. In regards to Park Serve Day, under the supervision of facility managers and team captains enlisted by the Governor’s Office, 1,330 volunteers participated in a variety of volunteer activities at 50 parks, beaches, and forests across the state. A total of 4,655 hours of effort resulted in the planting of 580 trees and flowers and the hauling away of 48.6 tons of trash. In addition to planting and trash clean up, volunteers conducted light trail work, painted buildings, built and assembled picnic tables, and raked leaves, all in an effort to spruce up the state parks and beaches for the recreational season. Due to this event this year DCR’s “Park Serve Day Team” was named as a recipient of a Manuel Carballo Award for Excellence in Public Service, a great honor and very well-deserving due to the dedication and hard work that was placed on this event.

III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

a. Finance Committee, *Whitney Hatch*

- i. Councilor Hatch informed the council that the finance committee meeting went well. Discussion on the FY09 budget, the rules are pretty similar, the agency will submit a maintenance budget of 2.5 million and said focus is to spread funds that will best bring the agency to a better place. Good processing shows how the money could be allocated. Councilor Hatch expressed their great interest in the tax laws. He mentioned that in the past three years, we have moved forward and have made monumental strides as an agency. He feels the voice of friends and partner groups are being heard and it has helped the agency tremendously.
- b. **Resource Management Plan Committee, *Dick Cross***
 - i. Chairman Cross informed the council that the committee are discussing with staff about the baseline issues, and how to implement tools to help RMP. He feels that the committee needs to work out the plans in process to give the best standards that can be applied to the agency.
- c. **Policy Committee, Policy Committee, Public Outreach and Consultation for Forest Cutting Plans Policy, *Laura Johnson, Jim DiMaio, Stephanie Cooper, and Jonathan Yeo***
 - i. Councilor Johnson introduced Jim DiMaio, Bureau Chief of Forestry & Fire Control; Jonathon Yeo, Director of Water Supply Protection; Stephanie Cooper, Chief of Staff to present and obtain a vote from the Stewardship Council to adopt the Public Outreach and Consultation for Forest Cutting Plans policy.
 - ii. Jim DiMaio gave a PowerPoint presentation of the policy for viewing during the discussion and passed out a hard copy of the policy to the council and the public attendees. The policy is intended to provide guidance on the Department of Conservation and Recreation internal review and public notice of and comment on forest management plan implementation timber harvesting (forest cutting) projects. The purpose for Forest Resource Management Plans (FRMP) is to meet the requirements of MGL Chapter 21, Section 2F, and the Forest Stewardship Council Northeast Standards for well managed forests for DCR land. This policy applies to DCR State Forests, Parks, and Reservations vegetation management projects. There was discussion on the objectives, and why a public notification is necessary. The policy, glossary, and Timber Harvest Summary- Public Comment Form will be accessible online, for the public. Provided executive briefing of the power point. Provided examples of product scenarios and Q & A followed for the council.
 - iii. Chairman Cross inquired the amount of forest cutting plans, and Jim responded that it averages about fifty cutting plans prepared each year. Chairman Cross also inquired asked about the process on comments. The process on comments is suggested to give others an opportunity for people to discuss any issues prior to just posting on the DCR internet. In cases elevated issues will engage in resolution. Councilor Johnson talked about the planning process, and discussed the forest cutting plans. In those plans, regarding the management process, there are resource constraints; she also informed that Jonathan Yeo concluded the document will continuously be updated and can be changed. The public comments from March & April were considered in the formatting of the draft. The goal is to have a process

in place. Councilor Johnson informed that in the packet there is an overview of the policy, and draft comment form.

- iv. Councilor Johnson asked the rest of council if they accept this process for the Forest Cutting Plan policy. All in favor to go with the policy, Councilor Johnson recused herself.

IV. **OHV Enforcement Working Group Update , Gary Briere**

a. The first meeting was held on August 10, 2007 where there was discussion on various components. Minutes to the meeting is posted on the DCR website:

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv/ohvworkgroup.htm>

Gary Briere stated that there was a lot of productive brain storming ideas but there is a need of additional individuals with expertise from transportation to be part of this working group. The OHV Working Group was assembled by Commissioner Rick Sullivan to accomplish four goals:

- Assess existing laws and regulations pertaining to the use and operation of recreation vehicles and identify opportunities and strategies to enhance their effectiveness for the protection of public safety, the environment, and public and private property
 - Review the current capacity of agencies charged with enforcing OHV laws and regulations and identify opportunities and financing strategies to increase the capacity of the enforcement system
 - Identify short-term opportunities and strategies to reduce unsafe and inappropriate use of OHVs that are currently available under existing laws, regulations, enforcement capacity and funding mechanisms
 - Identify opportunities to improve communication among stakeholders in order to increase safe, responsible and legal OHV use.
- b. There was discussion on the issues and possible changes under Chapter 90b and equipment needs. Gary states that he will let council know of developments. They will be listing public comments a lot earlier than before. The next meeting will be held on September 14, 2007. The group will review the number of bills that have been drafted to help with discussions on enforcement. Chairman Cross mentioned if Gary Briere can add other council to list serve. Councilor Wolf asked that the issues in bullet form can be sent to the council for review where they can place input to help with this policy. Dick Miller mentioned the snow mobile trail system and how it can relate to the OHV policy that will take place and to consider it. He read the article, and asked would this be a DCR policy, hoping it could and gave to Gary Briere to review.

V. **Approval of Minutes from August 9, 2007 meeting, Amendment to 6/7/07 minutes**

All were in favor of the minutes from August 9, 2007. All were in favor for the amended minutes from June 6, 2007. Councilor Johnson requested an amendment for the Executive session minutes in regards to the language that states abstain should be recused.

VI. **Public Comment**

- a. **Carol Berkowitz** of Protect Our Water Resources
 - i. Discussed the fish ponds and other ponds that are in desperate need of help by Lake Cochituate. Passed out pictures. Neglect becoming serious and asking to work in partnership with the town of Natick and does not want the water chestnuts to end up in lake.
- b. **Dick Miller** of the Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee
 - i. Mentioned fish pond too and the damage that is happening. Asked of importance to be aware of the danger of the water chestnuts to the lakes. Water chestnuts need attention. Mentioned the Rail Trail. Jonathan Yeo stated that the agency is aware, and are working on fish pond more than any other by Lake Cochituate. Jonathan Yeo informed that Ann Monnelly will be Acting Director of Water Resources.
- c. **Ray Weber** of the Friends of Robinson State Park
 - i. Expressed thanks for the Commissioner for coming to Robinson State Park It was greatly appreciated.
- d. **Steve Kaiser** of the Association of Cambridge Neighborhood
 - i. Minor complaints asking about officials & legislatures. He said the maintenance budget is treading, asked about more comments on the transfer of the bridges and asked the council to get more involved. Minor request over BU Bridge, said the sign has been knocked down and asked to be placed back up. Talked about book, that he suggested to read that gives a message to be tough & service oriented to keep parks safe.
- e. **Mike Ryan** of the Friends of Fells
 - i. OHV emails from friends groups asked to mention the enforcement needed, ATV, motorcycles, snow mobiles, etc. Need an enforcement group to share ideas such as a polarizing topic come clear that DCR issues represent 20% of the problems. They are sending thoughts to Gary Briere. He said responses have been good and have website for comments. Asked why not one of the friends group are on the committee. Gary Briere stated that it is open to the public to join but trying not to get the group too large so it can be productive. Mike Ryan read letter from group. Said none of the parks have any enforcement. Noted an article from NY and OHV in parks, all the tickets that were given, and the message given. He said never mind recreation but to the conservation. Councilor Wolf responded that it is part of the council's job to address these issues. Councilor Wolf asked how the Stewardship Council can be an ally and help as advocacy, to the issue on enforcement for OHV. Gary Briere states he understands the dynamics but under Chapter 90b that the attendance must be broad, and can't be segregated. Dick asked if Gary can speak next meeting to give more information after their next OHV meeting.
- f. **Janet Hunket** of the South Nest Corridor Park
 - i. Delighted to be there and concerned about FY08 budget and funds lessened, and it was to improve infrastructure, the lighting safety issue, and to hire staff. Also mentioned, volunteers. They need to teach them how to prune shrubs. Another issue is that they are the only park pesticide round up to remove them, it is a two

year period and now six months in and weeds growing. She says that now shrubs and weeds and grass are out of control.

g. **Kevin Handly** of the Self Arborway Oaks

- i. Resident of the Arborway on the Jamaicaway and talked about the Arborway and the connections. Talked about the canopy on the oaks. The heritage oaks are dying, and there are gas leaks under the trees on the Arborway. Says they are depending on the gas company to fix it, but it is not fixed, and that it is contributing to killing the heritage oaks. Gas leaks are detrimental. Asked DCR to independently investigate, report on the health of the Arborway, and Heritage oaks. Methane vapor gas is releasing and displaces the oxygen under the tree. Kevin Handly had an article which he distributed.

h. **Joe Dorant**, Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and Scientist

- i. Mr. Durant talked about the parkways, bridges and the transfer to EOT from EOEEA. He feels the parkways are a focus along with parks and should not be separated. He went over the letter from MOSES and testified for MHD finance department. There is a 5 year plan for all bridges but there are no operating funds for the capital projects. DCR should not be taking on more responsibilities. He said the Commissioner is a good listener, and hears the passion. Maintenance by MHD is done by contractors. The community has a great relationship with DCR. MHD does not have enough funding. He talked about layoffs with transfer of responsibilities. Priorities are not high standards at MHD. Commissioner thanked MOSES taking time to talk about the concerns

VII. **Meeting Schedule** – The next meeting will be held Friday, October 4, 2007. Proposed location and details will be sent out to the Stewardship Council and posted on the DCR internet.

Meeting adjourned 3:30 pm